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THE KING

AND THE

MILLER OF MANSFIELD.

A DRAMATIC TALE.

WRITTEN BY

R. DODSLEY.

TAKEN FROM

THE MANAGER's BOOK

AT THE

Theatre Royal, Covent-Garden.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

COVENT-GARDEN.

MEN.

The King — — —	Mr. Hull.
The Miller — — —	Mr. Wilson.
Richard — — —	Mr. Blanchard.
Lord Lurewell — — —	Mr. Bernard.
Courtiers and Keepers of the Forest	

WOMEN.

Peggy — — —	Mrs. Mattocks.
Margery — — —	Mrs. Web.
Kate — — —	Mrs. Wilson.

SCENE, SHERWOOD FOREST.

THE KING AND THE MILLER.

SCENE, *Sherwood Foreſt.—Enter ſeveral Courtiers as loſt.*

1ſt Cour. 'TIS horrid dark! and this wood, I believe, has neither end nor ſide.

4th Cour. You mean to get out at, for we have found one in, you ſee.

2d Cour. I wiſh our good king Harry had kept nearer home to hunt; in my mind, the pretty, tame deer in London make much better ſport than the wild ones in Sherwood Foreſt.

3d Cour. I can't tell which way his majeſty went, nor whether any body is with him or not; but let us keep together, pray.

4th Cour. Ay, ay, like true courtiers, take care of ourſelves, whatever becomes of maſter.

2d Cour. Well, it's a terrible thing to be loſt in the dark.

4th Cour. It is. And yet it's ſo common a caſe, that one would not think it ſhould be at all ſo. Why we are all of us loſt in the dark every day of our lives. Knaves keep us in the dark by their cunning, and fools by their ignorance. Divines loſe us in dark myſteries; lawyers in dark caſes; and ſtateſmen in dark intrigues. Nay, the light of reaſon, which we ſo much boaſt of, what is it but a dark lanthorn, which juſt ſerves to prevent us from running our noſe againſt a poſt, perhaps; but is no more able to lead us out of the dark miſts of error and ignorance, in which we are loſt, than an *ignis fatuus* would be to conduct us out of this wood.

1ſt Cour. But, my lord, this is no time for preaching, methinks. And, for all your morals, day-light would be much preferable to this darkneſs, I believe.

3d Cour. Indeed would it. But come, let us go on; we ſhall find ſome houſe or other by and by.

4th Cour. Come along. [*Exeunt.*

Enter the King *alone.*

No, no, this can be no public road, that's certain: *I* am loſt, quite loſt, indeed. Of what advantage is it now to be a king? night ſhews me no reſpect: *I* cannot ſee better, nor walk ſo well as another man. What is a king? Is he not wiſer than another man? not without his counſellors, *I* plainly find. Is he not more powerful? *I* oft have been told ſo, indeed; but what now can my power command? Is he not greater, and more magnificent? When ſeated on his throne, and ſurrounded with nobles and flat-

terers, perhaps he may think ſo; but when loſt in a wood, alas? what is he but a common man? His wiſdom knows not which is north and which is ſouth; his power a beggar's dog would bark at; and his greatneſs the beggar would not bow to. And yet how oft are we puffed up with theſe falſe attributes? Well, in loſing the monarch, *I* have found the man. [*A gun is heard.*

Hark! ſome villain ſure is near! What were it beſt to do? Will my majeſty protect me? No. Throw majeſty aſide then, and let manhood do it.

Enter the Miller.

Mil. *I* believe *I* hear the rogue. Who's there?

King. No rogue, *I* aſſure you.

Mil. Little better, friend, *I* believe. Who fired that gun?

King. Not *I*, indeed.

Mil. You lie, *I* believe.

King. Lie! lie! how ſtrange it ſeems to me to be talked to in this ſtile. (*aſide*) Upon my word, *I* don't.

Mil. Come, come, ſirrah, confeſs; you have ſhot one of the king's deer, have not you?

King. No, indeed; *I* owe the king more reſpect. *I* heard a gun go off, indeed, and was afraid ſome robbers might have been near.

Mil. I'm not bound to believe this, friend. Pray who are you? What's your name?

King. Name!

Mil. Name! yes, name. Why, you have a name, have not you? Where do you come from? What is your buſineſs here?

King. Theſe are queſtions *I* have not been us'd to, honeſt man.

Mil May be ſo; but they are queſtions no honeſt man would be afraid to anſwer, *I* think. So if you can give no better account of yourſelf, *I* ſhall make bold to take you along with me, if you pleaſe.

King. With you! what authority have you to——

Mil. The king's authority, if *I* muſt give you an account, ſir. *I* am John Cockle, the miller of Mansfield, one of his majeſty's keepers in this foreſt of Sherwood; and *I* will let no ſuſpected fellow paſs this way that cannot give a better account of himſelf than you have done, *I* promiſe you.

King. I muſt ſubmit to my own authority. (*Aſide.*) Very well, ſir, I am glad to hear the king has ſo good an officer; and ſince I find you have his authority, I will give you a

better

better account of myſelf, if you will do me the favour to hear it.

Mil. It's more than you deſerve, I believe; but let's hear what you can ſay for yourſelf.

King. I have the honour to belong to the king as well as you, and, perhaps ſhould be as unwilling to ſee any wrong done him. I came down with him to hunt in this foreſt, and the chace leading us to-day a great way from home, I am benighted in this wood, and have loſt my way.

Mil. This does not ſound well; if you have been a hunting, pray where is your horſe?

King. I have tired my horſe ſo that he lay down under me, and I was obliged to leave him.

Mil. If I thought I might believe this now.

King. I am not uſed to lie, honeſt man.

Mil. What! do you live at court and not lie! that's a likely ſtory indeed.

King. Be that as it will, I ſpeak truth now, I aſſure you; and to convince you of it, if you will attend me to Nottingham, if I am near it, or give me a night's lodging in your own houſe, here is ſomething to pay you for your trouble; and if that is not ſufficient, I will ſatisfy you in the morning to your utmoſt deſire.

Mil. Ay, now I am convinced you are a courtier; here is a little bribe for to-day, and a large promiſe for to-morrow, both in a breath: here, take it again, and take this along with it——John Cockle is no courtier; he can do what he ought—without a bribe.

King. Thou art a very extraordinary man I muſt own, and I ſhould be glad, methinks, to be farther acquainted with thee.

Mil. Thee! and thou! prithee, don't thee and thou me: I believe I am as good a man as yourſelf at leaſt.

King. Sir, I beg your pardon.

Mil. Nay, I am not angry, friend; only I don't love to be too familiar with any body, before I know whether they deſerve it or not.

King. You are in the right. But what am I to do?

Mil. You may do what you pleaſe. You are twelve miles from Nottingham, and all the way through this thick wood; but if you are reſolved upon going thither to-night, I will put you in the road, and direct you the beſt I can; or if you will accept of ſuch poor entertainment as a miller can give, you ſhall be welcome to ſtay all night, and in the morning I will go with you myſelf.

King. And cannot you go with me to-night?

Mil. I would not go with you to-night, if you were the king.

King. Then I muſt go with you, I think. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE *changes to the Town of* Mansfield.

Dick alone. Well, dear Mansfield, I am glad to ſee thy face again. But my heart aches, methinks, for fear this ſhould be only a trick of theirs to get me into their power. Yet the letter ſeems to be wrote with an air of ſincerity, I confeſs; and the girl was never uſed to lie till ſhe kept a lord company. Let me ſee, I'll read it once more.

"Dear Richard,

"I am at laſt (though much too late for me) convinced "of the injury done to us both by that baſe man, who made "me think you falſe; he contrived theſe letter which I "ſend you, to make me think you juſt upon the point of "being married to another, a thought I could not bear "with patience; ſo, aiming at revenge on you, conſented "to my own undoing. But, for your own ſake, I beg "you to return hither, for I have ſome hopes of being able "to do you juſtice, which is the only comfort of your moſt "diſtreſſed, but ever affectionate

"PEGGY."

There can be no cheat in this, ſure! the letters ſhe has ſent are, I think, a proof of her ſincerity. Well, I will go to her, however: I cannot think ſhe will again betray me: if ſhe has as much tenderneſs left for me, as, in ſpite of her ill uſage, I ſtill feel for her, I'm ſure ſhe won't. Let me ſee, I am not far from the houſe, I believe. [*Exit.*

SCENE *changes to a Room.*—Peggy *and* Phœbe.

Phœbe. Pray, madam, make yourſelf eaſy.

Peggy. Ah! Phœbe, ſhe that has loſt her virtue has with it loſt her eaſe, and all her happineſs. Believing, cheated fool! to think him falſe.

Phœbe. Be patient, madam, I hope you will ſhortly be revenged on that deceitful lord.

Peggy. I hope I ſhall, for that were juſt revenge. But will revenge make me happy? Will it excuſe my falſehood? Will it reſtore me to the heart of my much-injured love? Ah! no. That blooming innocence he us'd to praiſe, and call the greateſt beauty of our ſex, is gone. I have no charm left that might renew that flame I took ſuch pains to quench. [*Knocking.*

See who's there. O heavens, 'tis he! Alas! that ever I ſhould be aſhamed to ſee the man I love!

Enter Richard, *who ſtands looking on her at a diſtance, ſhe weeping.*

Dick. Well, Peggy (but I ſuppoſe you're madam now in that fine dreſs), you ſee you have brought me back; is it to triumph in your falſhood? or am I to receive the ſlighted leavings of your fine lord?

Peggy. O Richard! after the injury I have done you, I cannot look on you without confuſion: but do not think ſo hardly of me. I ſtayed not to be ſlighted by him; for the moment I diſcovered his vile plot on you, I fled his ſight, nor could he ever prevail to ſee me ſince.

Dick. Ah, Peggy! you were too haſty in believing; and much I fear, the vengeance aim'd at me, had other charms to recommend it to you: ſuch bravery as that (*pointing to her cloaths*) I had not to beſtow; but if a tender honeſt heart could pleaſe you had it all; and if I wiſhed for more, 'twas for your ſake.

Peggy. O Richard! when you conſider the wicked ſtratagem he contrived to make me think you baſe and deceitful, I hope you will, at leaſt, pity my folly, and, in ſome meaſure, excuſe my falſhood, that you will forgive me, I dare not hope.

Dick. To be forc'd to fly from my friends and country, for a crime that I was innocent of, is an injury that I cannot eaſily forgive, to be ſure: but if you are leſs guilty of it than I thought, I ſhall be very glad; and if your deſign be really as you ſay, to clear me, and to expoſe the baſeneſs of him that betrayed and ruined you, I will join with you with all my heart. But how do you propoſe to do this?

Peggy. The king is now in this foreſt a hunting, and our young lord is every day with him: now, I think, if we could take ſome opportunity of throwing ourſelves at his majeſty's feet, and complaining of the injuſtice of one of his courtiers, it might, perhaps, have ſome effect upon him.

Dick. If we were ſuffered to make him ſenſible of it, perhaps it might; but the complaints of ſuch little folks as we ſeldom reach the ears of majeſty.

Peggy. We can but try.

Dick. Well, if you will go with me to my father's, and ſtay there till ſuch an opportunity happens, I ſhall believe you in earneſt, and will join with you in your deſign.

Peggy. I will do any thing to convince you of my ſincerity, and to make ſatisfaction for the injuries which have been done you.

Dick. Will you go now?

Peggy. I'll be with you in leſs than an hour. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE *changes to the Mill.*—Margery *and* Kate *knitting.*

Kate. O dear, I would not ſee a ſpirit for all the world; but I love dearly to hear ſtories of them. Well, and what then?

Mar. And ſo at laſt, in a diſmal hollow tone it cry'd—

[*A knocking; they ſcream out.*

Mar. and Kate. Lord bleſs us! What's that?

Kate. O dear mother, it's ſome judgment upon us, I'm afraid. They ſay, talk of the devil, and he'll appear.

Mar. Kate, go and ſee who's at the door.

Kate. I durſt not go, mother; do you go.

Mar. Come, let's both go.

Kate. Now don't ſpeak as if you was afraid.

Mar. No, I won't if I can help it. Who's there?

Dick without.) What! won't you let me in?

Kate. O gemini! it's like our Dick, I think: he's certainly dead, and it's his ſpirit.

Mar. Heav'n forbid! I think in my heart it's he himſelf. Open the door, Kate.

Katr. Nay, do you.

Mar. Come, we'll both open it. [*They open the door.*

Enter Dick.

Dick. Dear mother, how do you do? I thought you would have let me in.

Mar. Dear child, I'm overjoyed to ſee thee; but I was ſo frighted, I did not know what to do.

Kate. Dear brother, I am glad to ſee you; how have you done this long while?

Dick. Very well, Kate. But where's my father?

Mar. He heard a gun go off juſt now, and he's gone to ſee who 'tis.

Dick. What, they love veniſon at Mansfield as well as ever, I ſuppoſe?

Kate. And they will have it too.

Mil. without.) Hoa! Madge! Kate! bring a light here.

Mar. Yonder he is.

Kate. Has he catch'd the rogue, I wonder.

Enter the King *and the* Miller.

Mar. Who have you got?

Mil. I have brought thee a ſtranger, Madge; thou muſt give him a ſupper, and a lodging if thou can'ſt.

Mar. You have got a better ſtranger of your own, I can tell you; Dick's come.

Mil. Dick! Where is he? Why, Dick! How is't, my lad?

Dick. Very well, I thank you, father.

King. A little more, and you had puſhed me down.

Mil. Faith, ſir, you muſt excuſe me; I was overjoyed to ſee my boy. He has been at London, and I have not ſeen him theſe four years.

King. Well, I ſhall once in my life have the happineſs of being treated as a common man; and of ſeeing human nature without diſguiſe. [*Aſide.*

Mil. What has brought thee home ſo unexpected?

Dick. You will know that preſently.

Mil. Of that by-and-by then. We have got the king down in the foreſt a hunting this ſeaſon, and this honeſt gentleman, who came down with his majeſty from London, has been with 'em to-day, it ſeems, and has loſt his way. Come, Madge, ſee what thou can'ſt get for ſupper. Kill a couple of the beſt fowls; and go you, Kate, and draw a pitcher of ale. We are famous, ſir, at Mansfield, for good ale, and for honeſt fellows that know how to drink it.

King. Good ale will be acceptable at preſent, for I am very dry. But pray, how came your ſon to leave you, and go to London?

Mil. Why, that's a ſtory which Dick, perhaps, won't like to have told.

King. Then I don't deſire to hear it.

Enter Kate, *with an earthen Pitcher of Ale and a Horn.*

Mil. So, now do you go help your mother.—Sir, my hearty ſervice to you.

King. Thank ye, ſir. This plain ſincerity and freedom is a happineſs unknown to kings. [*Aſide.*

Mil. Come, ſir,

King. Richard, my ſervice to you.

Dick. Thank you, ſir.

Mil. Well, Dick, and how doſt thou like London? Come, tell us what thou haſt ſeen.

Dick. Seen! I have ſeen the Land of Promiſe.

Mil. The Land of Promiſe! What doſt thou mean?

Dick. The court, father.

Mil. Thou wilt never leave joking.

Dick. To be ſerious then, I have ſeen the diſappointment of my hopes and expectations; and that's more than one would wiſh to ſee.

Mil. What! would the great man, thou waſt recommended to, do nothing at all for thee at laſt?

Dick. Why, yes; he would promiſe me to the laſt.

Mil. Zounds! do the courtiers think their dependents can eat promiſes?

Dick. No, no; they never trouble their heads to think, whether we eat at all or not. I have now dangled after his lordſhip ſeveral years, tantalized with hopes and expectations; this year promiſed one place, the next another, and the third, in ſure and certain hope of——a diſappointment. One falls, and it was promiſed before; another, and I am juſt half an hour too late; a third, and it ſtops the mouth of a creditor; a fourth, and it pays the hire of a flatterer; a fifth, and it bribes a vote; and the ſixth I am promiſed ſtill. But having thus ſlept away ſome years, I awoke from my dream: my lord, I found, was ſo far from having it in his power to get a place for me, that he had been all this while ſeeking after one for himſelf.

Mil. Poor Dick! And is plain honeſty then a recommendation to no place at court!

Dick. It may recommend you to be a footman, perhaps, but nothing further, nothing further, indeed. If you look higher, you muſt furniſh yourſelf with other qualifications: you muſt learn to ſay ay, or no; to run, or ſtand; to fetch, or carry, or leap over a ſtick at the word of command. You muſt be maſter of the arts of flattery, inſinuation, diſſimulation, application, and (*pointing to his palm*) right application too, if you hope to ſucceed.

King. You don't conſider I'm a courtier, methinks.

Dick. Not I, indeed; 'tis no concern of mine what you are. If in general my character of the court is true, 'tis not my fault if it's diſagreeable to your worſhip. There are particular exceptions, I own, and I hope you may be one.

King. Nay, I don't want to be flattered, ſo let that paſs. Here's better ſucceſs to you the next time you go to London.

Dick. I thank ye; but I don't deſign to ſee it again in haſte.

Mil. No, no, Dick; inſtead of depending upon lord's promiſes depend upon the labour of thine own hands; expect nothing but what thou can'ſt earn, and then thou wilt not be diſappointed. But come, I want a deſcription of London; thou haſt told us nothing thou haſt ſeen yet.

Dick. O, 'tis a fine place! I have ſeen large houſes with ſmall hoſpitality; great men do little actions; and fine ladies do nothing at all. I have ſeen the honeſt lawyers of Weſtminſter-Hall, and the virtuous inhabitants of 'Change-Alley; the politick madmen of coffee-houſes, and the wiſe ſtateſmen of Bedlam. I have ſeen merry tragedies, and ſad comedies; devotion at an opera, and mirth at a ſermon; I have ſeen fine cloaths at St. James's, and long bills at

Ludgate-Hill. I have ſeen poor grandeur, and rich poverty; high honours, and low flattery; great pride, and no merit. In ſhort, I have ſeen a fool with a title, a knave with a penſion, and an honeſt man with a thread-bare coat. Pray, how do you like London?

Mil. And is this the beſt deſcription thou can'ſt give of it?

Dick. Yes.

King. Why, Richard, you are a ſatiriſt, I find.

Dick. I love to ſpeak truth, ſir: if that happens to be ſatire, I can't help it.

Mil. Well! if this is London, give me my country cottage; which, though it is not a great houſe, nor a fine houſe, is my own houſe, and I can ſhew a receipt for the building on't. But come, ſir, our ſupper, I believe, is ready for us by this time; and to ſuch as I have, you're welcome as a prince.

King. I thank you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE *changes to the Wood.—Enter ſeveral* Keepers.

1ſt Keep. The report of a gun was ſomewhere this way, I'm ſure.

2d Keep. Yes; but I can never believe that any body would come a dear-ſtealing ſo dark a night as this.

3d Keep. Where did the deer harbour to day?

4th Keep. There was a herd lay upon Hamilton Hill, another juſt by Robin Hood's Chair, and a third here in Mansfield Wood.

1ſt Keep. Ay, thoſe they have been amongſt.

2d Keep. But we ſhall never be able to find 'em to-night, 'tis ſo dark.

3d Keep. No, no; let's go back again.

1ſt Keep. Zoons! you're afraid of a broken head, I ſuppoſe, if we ſhould find 'em; and ſo had rather ſlink back again. Hark! ſtand cloſe. I hear 'em coming this way.

Enter the Courtiers.

1ſt Cour. Did not you hear ſomebody juſt now? Faith, I begin to be afraid we ſhall meet with ſome misfortune to-night.

2d Cour. Why, if any body ſhould take what we have got, we have made a fine buſineſs of it.

3d Cour. Let them take it if they will; I am ſo tired I ſhall make but ſmall reſiſtance. [*The Keepers ruſh upon them.*

2d Keep. Ay, rogues, raſcals, and villains; you have got it, have you?

2d Cour. Indeed we have got but very little, but what we have you're welcome to, if you will but uſe us civilly.

1ſt Keep. O yes! very civilly; you deſerve to be uſed civilly, to be ſure.

4th Cour. Why, what have we done that we may not be civilly uſed?

1ſt Keep. Come, come, don't trifle, ſurrender.

1ſt Cour. I have but three half-crowns about me.

2d Cour. Here's three and ſixpence for you, gentlemen.

3d Cour. Here's my watch; I have no money at all.

4th Cour. Indeed I have nothing in my pocket but a ſnuff-box.

4th Keep. What! the dogs want to bribe us, do they? No, raſcals; you ſhall go before the juſtice to-morrow, depend on't.

4th Cour. Before the juſtice! What, for being robbed?

1ſt Keep. For being robbed! What do you mean? Who has robbed you?

4th Cour. Why, did not you juſt now demand our money, gentlemen?

2d Keep. O, the raſcals! they will ſwear a robbery againſt us, I warrant.

4th Cour. A robbery! ay, to be ſure.

1ſt Keep. No, no; we did not demand your money, we demanded the deer you have killed.

4th Cour. The devil take the deer, I ſay; he led us a chace of ſix hours, and got away from us at laſt.

1ſt Keep. Zoons! ye dogs, do ye think to banter us? I tell ye you have this night ſhot one of the king's deer; did not we hear the gun go off? Did not we hear you ſay, you was afraid it ſhould be taken from you?

2d Cour. We were afraid our money ſhould be taken from us.

1ſt Keep. Come, come, no more ſhuffling: I tell ye, ye're all rogues, and we'll have you hanged, you may depend on't. Come, let's take them to old Cockle's; we're not far off; we'll keep 'em there all night, and to-morrow morning we'll away with 'em before the juſtice.

4th Cour. A very pretty adventure! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE *changes to the Mill.*

King, Miller, Margery, *and* Dick, *at Supper.*

Mil. Come, ſir, you muſt mend a bad ſupper with a glaſs of good ale; here's King Harry's health.

King. With all my heart. Come, Richard, here's King Harry's health; I hope you are courtier enough to pledge me, are not you?

Dick. Yes, yes, ſir, I'll drink the king's health with all my heart.

Mar. Come, ſir, my humble ſervice to you, and much good may do ye with your poor ſupper; I wiſh it had been better.

King. You need make no apologies. [rudeneſs.

Mar. We are obliged to your goodneſs in excuſing our

Mil. Prithee, Margery, don't trouble the gentleman with compliments.

Mar. Lord, huſband, if one had no more manners than you, the gentleman would take us all for hogs.

Mil. Now I think the more compliments the leſs manners.

King. I think ſo too. Compliments in diſcourſe, I believe, are like ceremonies in religion; the one has deſtroyed all true piety, and the other all ſincerity and plain-dealing.

Mil. Then a fig for all ceremony and compliments too; give us thy hand, and let us drink and be merry.

King. Right, honeſt miller, let us drink and be merry. Come, have you got e'er a good ſong?

Mil. Ah! my ſinging days are over, but my man Joe has got an excellent one; and if you have a mind to hear it, I'll call him in.

King. With all my heart.

Mil. Joe!

Enter Joe.

Mil. Come, Joe, drink boy; I have promiſed this gentleman that you ſhall ſing him your laſt new ſong.

Joe. Well, maſter, if you have promiſed it him, he ſhall have it.

SONG.

How happy a ſtate does the miller poſſeſs?
Who wou'd be no greater, nor fears to be leſs;
On his mill and himſelf he depends for ſupport,
Which is better than ſervilely cringing at court.

What tho' he all duſty and whiten'd does go,
The more he's be-powder'd, the more like a beau;
A clown in this dreſs may be honeſter far
Than a courtier who ſtruts in his garter and ſtar.

Tho' his hands are ſo dawb'd they're not fit to be ſeen,
The hands of his betters are not very clean;
A palm more polite may as dirtily deal;
Gold, in handling, will ſtick to the fingers like meal.

What if, when a pudding for dinner he lacks,
He cribs, without ſcruple, from other men's ſacks;
In this of right noble examples he brags,
Who borrow as freely from other men's bags.

Or ſhould he endeavour to heap an eſtate,
In this he wou'd mimic the tools of the ſtate;
Whoſe aim is alone their own coffers to fill,
As all his concern's to bring griſt to the mill.

He eats when he's hungry, he drinks when he's dry,
And down when he's weary contented does lie;
Then riſes up chearful to work and to ſing:
If ſo happy a miller, then who'd be a king?

Mil. There's a ſong for you.

King. He ſhould go and ſing this at court, I think.

Dick. I believe, if he's wiſe, he will chuſe to ſtay at home, though.

Enter Peggy.

Mil. What wind blew you hither, pray! You have a good ſhare of impudence, or you would be aſhamed to ſet your foot within my houſe, methinks.

Peggy. Aſhamed I am, indeed, but do not call me impudent. [*Weeps.*

Dick. Dear father, ſuſpend your anger for the preſent; that ſhe is here now is by my direction, and to do me juſtice.

Peggy. To do that is all that is now in my power; for as to myſelf, I am ruined paſt redemption; my character, my virtue, my peace, are gone: I am abandoned by my friends, deſpiſed by the world, and expoſed to miſery and want.

King. Pray let me know the ſtory of your misfortunes; perhaps it may be in my power to do ſomething towards redreſſing them.

Peggy. That you may learn from him whom I have wronged; but as for me, ſhame will not let me ſpeak, or hear it told. [*Exit.*

King. She's very pretty.

Dick. O, ſir, I once thought her an angel; I loved her dearer than my life, and did believe her paſſion was the ſame for me: but a young nobleman of this neighbourhood happening to ſee her, her youth and blooming beauty preſently ſtruck his fancy; a thouſand artifices were immediately employed to debauch and ruin her. But all his arts were vain; not even the promiſe of making her his wife could prevail upon her: in a little time he found out her love to me, and, imagining this to be the cauſe of her refuſal, he, by forged letters, and feigned ſtories, contrived to make her believe I was upon the point of marriage with another woman. Poſſeſſed with this opinion, ſhe, in a rage, writes me word, never to ſee her more; and, in revenge, conſented to her own undoing. Not contented with this, nor

eaſy while I was ſo near her, he bribed one of his caſt-off miſtreſſes to ſwear a child to me, which ſhe did: this was the occaſion of my leaving my friends, and flying to London.

King. And how does ſhe propoſe to do you juſtice?

Dick. Why, the king being now in this foreſt a hunting, we deſign to take ſome opportunity of throwing ourſelves at his majeſty's feet, and complaining of the injuſtice done us by this noble villain.

Mil. Ah, Dick! I expect but little redreſs from ſuch an application. Things of this nature are ſo common among the great, that I am afraid it will only be made a jeſt of.

King. Thoſe that can make a jeſt of what ought to be ſhocking to humanity, ſurely deſerve not the name of great or noble men.

Dick. What do you think of it, ſir? If you belong to the court, you, perhaps, may know ſomething of the king's temper.

King. Why, if I can judge of his temper at all, I think he would not ſuffer the greateſt nobleman in his court, to do an injuſtice to the meaneſt ſubject in his kingdom. But pray, who is the nobleman that is capable of ſuch actions as theſe?

Dick. Do you know my Lord Lurewell?

King. Yes.

Dick. That's the man.

King. Well, I would have you put your deſign in execution. 'Tis my opinion the king would not only hear your complaint, but redreſs your injuries.

Mil. I wiſh it may prove ſo.

Enter the Keepers *leading in the* Courtiers.

1ſt Keeper. Holoa, Cockle! Where are ye? Why, man, we have nabbed a pack of rogues here juſt in the fact.

King. Ha, ha, ha! What, turned highwaymen, my lords, or deer-ſtealers?

1ſt Cour. I am very glad to find your majeſty in health and ſafety.

2d Cour. We have run through a great many perils and dangers to-night; but the joy at finding your majeſty ſo unexpectedly, will make us forget all we have ſuffered.

Mil. and Dick. What! is this the king?

King. I am very glad to ſee you, my lords, I confeſs; and particularly you, my Lord Lurewell.

Lure. Your majeſty does me honour.

King. Yes, my lord, and I will do you juſtice too; your honour has been highly wronged by this young man.

Lure. Wrong'd, my liege!

King. I hope ſo, my lord; for I fain would believe you can't be guilty of baſeneſs and treachery.

Lure. I hope your majeſty will never find me ſo. What dares this villain ſay?

Dick. I am not to be frighted, my lord, I dare ſpeak truth at any time.

Lure. Whatever ſtains my honour muſt be falſe.

King. I know it muſt, my lord; yet has this man, not knowing who I was, preſum'd to charge your lordſhip, not only with great injuſtice to himſelf, but alſo with ruining an innocent virgin whom he loved, and who was to have been his wife; which, if true, were baſe and treacherous; but I know 'tis falſe, and therefore leave it to your lordſhip to ſay what puniſhment I ſhall inflict upon him, for the injury done to your honour.

Lure. I thank your majeſty. I will not be ſevere; he ſhall only aſk my pardon, and to-morrow morning be obliged to marry the creature he has traduced me with.

King. This is mild. Well, you hear your ſentence.

Dick. May I not have leave to ſpeak before your majeſty?

King. What canſt thou ſay?

Dick. If I had your majeſty's permiſſion, I believe I have certain witneſſes which will undeniably prove the truth of all I have accuſed hi lordſhip of.

King. Produce them.

Dick. Peggy!

Enter Peggy.

King. Do you know this woman, my lord?

Lure. I know her, pleaſe your majeſty, by ſight; ſhe is tenant's daughter.

Peggy. [*Aſide.*] Majeſty! What, is this the king?

Dick. Yes.

King. Have you no particular acquaintance with her?

Lure. Hum—I have not ſeen her theſe ſeveral months.

Dick. True, my lord; and that is part of your accuſation; for, I believe I have ſome letters which will prove your lordſhip once had a more particular acquaintance with her. Here is one of the firſt his lordſhip wrote to her, full of the tendereſt and moſt ſolemn proteſtations of love and conſtancy; here is another which will inform your majeſty of the pains he took to ruin her; there is an abſolute promiſe of marriage before he could accompliſh it.

King. What ſay you, my lord, are theſe your hand?

Lure. I believe, pleaſe your majeſty, I might have a little affair of gallantry with the girl ſome time ago.

King. It was a little affair, my lord; a mean affair; and what you call gallantry, I call infamy. Do you think, my lord, that greatneſs gives a ſanction to wickedneſs? or that it is the prerogative of lords to be unjuſt and inhumane? You remember the ſentence which yourſelf pronounced upon this innocent man; you cannot think it hard that it ſhould paſs upon you who are guilty.

Lure. I hope your majeſty will conſider my rank, and not oblige me to marry her.

King. Your rank, my lord. Greatneſs that ſtoops to actions baſe and low, deſerts its rank, and pulls its honours down. What makes your lordſhip great? Is it your gilded equipage and dreſs? Then put it on your meaneſt ſlave, and he's as great as you. Is it your riches or eſtate? The villain that ſhould plunder you of all, would then be as great as you. No, my lord, he that acts greatly, is the true great man. I therefore think you ought, in juſtice, to marry her you thus have wronged.

Peggy. Let my tears thank your majeſty. But alas! I am afraid to marry this young lord; that would only give him power to uſe me worſe, and ſtill encreaſe my miſery; I therefore beg your majeſty will not command him to do it.

King. Riſe then, and hear me. My lord, you ſee how low the greateſt nobleman may be reduced by ungenerous actions. Here is, under your own hand, an abſolute promiſe of marriage to this young woman, which, from a thorough knowledge of your unworthineſs, ſhe has prudently declined to make you fulfil. I ſhall therefore not inſiſt upon it; but I command you, upon pain of my diſpleaſure, immediately to ſettle on her three hundred pounds a year.

Peggy. May heaven reward your majeſty's goodneſs. 'Tis too much for me; but if your majeſty thinks fit, let it be ſettled upon this much-injured man, to make ſome ſatisfaction for the wrongs which have been done him. As to myſelf, I only ſought to clear the innocence of him I loved and wronged, then hide me from the world, and die forgiven.

Dick. This act of generous virtue cancels all paſt failings; come to my arms, and be as dear as ever.

Peggy. You cannot ſure forgive me!

Dick. I can, I do, and ſtill will make you mine.

Peggy. O! why did I ever wrong ſuch generous love?

Dick. Talk no more of it. Here let us kneel, and thank the goodneſs which has made us bleſt.

King. May you be happy.

Mil. (*Kneels*) After I have ſeen ſo much of your ma-

jesty's goodness, I cannot despair of pardon, even for the rough usage your majesty received from me.

[*The* King *draws his sword, the* Miller *is frighted, and rises up, thinking he was going to kill him.*]

What have I done that I should lose my life?

King. Kneel without fear. No, my good host, so far are you from having any thing to pardon, that I am much your debtor. I cannot think but so good and honest a man will make a worthy and honourable knight; so rise up, Sir John Cockle; and to support your state, and in some sort requite the pleasure you have done us, a thousand marks a year shall be your revenue.

Mil. Your majesty's bounty I receive with thankfulness; I have been guilty of no meanness to obtain it, and hope I shall not be obliged to keep it upon base conditions; for though I am willing to be a faithful subject, I am resolved to be a free, and an honest man.

King. I rely upon your being so: and, to gain the friendship of such a one, I shall always think an addition to my happiness, though a king.

Worth, in whatever state, is sure a prize,
Which kings, of all men, ought not to despise;
By selfish sycophants so close besieg'd,
'Tis by mere chance a worthy man's oblig'd:
But hence, to every courtier be it known,
Virtue shall find protection from the throne.

THE END.